

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 081746Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0971

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 07031

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PARM, MBFR

SUBJECT: MBFR: HMG COMMENTS ON US OPTION III PAPER

REF: LONDON 6081

1. TICKELL CALLED US TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE TODAY TO RECEIVE A COPY OF THE BRITISH COMMENTS ON THE US OAOER ON OOTION III. THESE COMMENTS HE SAID REPRESENT THE FORMAL REACTION OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO OUR PAOER. BRITISH COMMENTS WERE CABLED TO THE UK EMBASSY IN //WSHINGTON TODAY FOR DELIVERY (OROBABLY TOMORROW) TO CONCERNED AGENCIES OF USG.

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF BRITISH COMMENTS:

"1. WE HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE PROPOSALS OF THE US GOVERNMENT ON NEXT STEPS IN MBFR AS SET OUT IN THE PAPER HANDED OVER BY THE US EMBASSY IN LONDON ON 18 APRIL 1975. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THIS FURTHER OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT BEFORE THE DEBATE ON THE SUBJECT WITHIN THE ALLIANCE BEGINS.

"2. WE AGREE WITH THE PRINCIPAL CONCLUSION OF THE PAPER THAT OF THE VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES NOW OPEN TO THE ALLIANCE THE OFFER OF OPTION III PROVIDES THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF ADVANCING THE NEGOTIATIONS AND OF SECUR-

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ING THE ESSENTIAL ALLIED OBJECTIVES IN THEM. SUBJECT

TO THE AGREEMENT OF THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE AND TO SATIS-  
FACTION ON THE POINTS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO THE  
UNITED KINGDOM, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT THEREFORE ACCEPTS  
IN PRINCIPLE THE PROPOSAL THAT US NUCLEAR WEAPONS SHOULD  
BE BROUGHT INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS IN THE FORM OF OPTION  
III.

"3. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES AND GIVEN THAT THE  
ALLIES HAVE NO FURTHER OFFER TO MAKE OF COMPARABLE IM-  
PORTANCE, WE BELIEVE THAT THE ALLIES SHOULD USE OPTION  
III AS A ONCE AND FOR ALL OFFER TO SECURE THE ACCEPTANCE  
BY THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES OF THEIR PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE  
IN THE NEGOTIATIONS: THE EVENTUAL ACHIEVEMENT OF A  
COMMON CEILING IN GROUND (OR GROUND AND AIR) FORCE  
MANPOWER WITHIN THE REDUCTIONS AREA. IN OUR VIEW THE  
ALLIES SHOULD ALSO INSIST ON WARSAW PACT ACCEPTANCE OF  
THEIR PROPOSALS FOR PHASE I OF THE NEGOTIATIONS,  
INCLUDING THE WITHDRAWAL OF 68,000 SOVIET TROOPS IN THE  
FORM OF A FIVE DIVISION TANK ARMY AND 1,700 MAIN BATTLE  
TANKS. IT WILL OF COURSE BE NECESSARY TO DEFINE THE  
COMMON CEILING FOR THESE PURPOSES, PROBABLY IN NUMERICAL  
TERMS. IN OUR JUDGMENT FAILURE TO SECURE WARSAW PACT  
COMMITMENT TO THE COMMON CEILING APPROPRIATELY DEFINED  
RATHER THAN TO THE "CONCEPT" OF A COMMON CEILING WOULD  
PUT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ALLIED OBJECTIVES FOR THE  
NEGOTIATIONS AT SERIOUS RISK.

"4. THE PROBLEM OF HOW TO DEAL WITH CEILINGS AND  
CONSTRAINTS IS OF THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE. THE LINE  
SUGGESTED IN THE US PAPER REPRESENTS ONE APPROACH: AND

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WE WOULD BE GLAD TO ACCEPT IT AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION. BUT OTHER APPROACHES ARE POSSIBLE AND WE SHALL WISH TO GIVE THE SUBJECT FULL EXAMINATION WITHIN THE ALLIANCE. IN THE MEANTIME WE RESERVE OUR POSITION. WE ATTACH PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO THE PROTECTION OF OUR OWN EQUIPMENT PROGRAMMES AND THOSE OF OUR ALLIES, AND TO THE EFFECT OF CEILINGS AND CONSTRAINTS ON THE EQUIPMENT PROGRAMMES OF MEMBERS OF THE WARSAW PACT.

"5. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT CONSIDER IT ESSENTIAL THAT THE MILITARY AND TECHNICAL IMPLICATIONS OF OPTION III ARE FULLY ASSESSED IN THE ALLIANCE AND THE NECESSARY DECISIONS ARE TAKEN BY THE ALLIES BEFORE OPTION III IS TABLED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. APPROPRIATE MACHINERY IN THE ALLIANCE MUST THEREFORE BE AVAILABLE FOR THE PURPOSE."

3. COMMENT: TICKELL LAID PARTICULAR STRESS ON LAST PARA IN BRITISH PAPER TO WHICH THEY ATTACH IMPORTANCE. WHEN QUESTIONED HE SAID THAT IT IS NOT THE BRITISH PURPOSE TO DELAY IN ANY WAY ALLIANCE STUDY OF OPTION III. HE MAINTAINED THAT THE BRITISH FIRMLY BELIEVE THE ALLIES SHOULD NOT AWAIT RUSSIAN REACTIONS BUT RATHER HAVE AGREED POSITIONS IN ADVANCE.

RICHARDSON

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